ART. XI. *On the Influence of Sea Life upon Health.* By RICHARD McSHERRY, M.D. Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Navy. [Communicated by THOMAS HARRIS, M. D., Chief Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, U. S. Navy.]

As the subject of the influence of sea life on health is one of much interest, I beg leave to offer to your readers the following statement of the most prominent diseases, out of something over a thousand cases, admitted into this hospital during the years 1845, 6, 7, and 8, with some few remarks based upon personal observation.

I find on the register, 132 cases of pulmonary disease; of which 43 were entered *pneumonia,* 41 *bronchitis,* 25 catarrh, simple or complicated; 18 *phthisis,* and 5 *hæmoptysis*; 107 of dysentery and diarrhœa; 215 of fevers of various grades, types, and forms, from the malignant yellow fever of the West Indies, and the shores of the *tierras calientes* of Mexico, to the mildest intermittents of temperate and healthful regions. 130 of those maladies resulting, directly and indirectly, from impure intercourse with females; 82 of rheumatism, chronic, in nine cases out of ten; 26 of various organic diseases of the heart, and 12 of insanity. Of the remaining cases, upwards of 80 were injuries; including fractures, dislocations, &c.; and the three hundred and more not enumerated, embraced nearly all the ills that flesh is heir to. Thus we find the drunkard's mania, dyspepsia, hepatitis, the prostration mental and physical, that follows certain violent fevers, as those of the coast of Africa, various local inflammations and disorders, skin diseases, &c. The old curse of seamen, the scurvy, is almost unknown on our records, thanks to the lights of the age; two cases, brought most probably from the Gulf of Mexico (for there were some instances of it, during the blockade of that coast), appear on the books, standing as mementos of a once formidable enemy, long since overthrown, and now, well-nigh forgotten. Another tribute to scientific progress is found in the fact, that not one case of small-pox is recorded, though there are several of varioloid.

It will be observed that *phthisis* bears a very small proportion to the cases enumerated; for supposing, as is probable, that some of those entered as *bronchitis,* or more particularly *hæmoptysis,* resulted in the genuine tubercular disease, still the relative proportion to the whole little exceeds two per cent., a small ratio compared with the statistics on shore. Sailors have no exemption from consumption; and their manner of life is, to a certain extent, favourable to the development of acute diseases of the chest; thus they sleep crowded together by hundreds on the berth-deck, which is reeking with hot vapour from their breaths and persons, when, at the change of the watch, they leave their heated atmosphere, and find themselves suddenly cooled by the open air on the spar-deck, or perhaps by the keen breeze they may have to encounter in the aerial regions of the royal yards. *Per contra,* they spend their lives in the comparatively uniform temperature of sea air; they enjoy, in the navy at least, wholesome food and good clothing; besides which, their flights aloft, exercising equally the upper and lower extremities, expand the chest freely, open the air-tubes through all their ramifications, disperse the stagnation of blood in the capillaries, that oppresses the sedentary with a sense of weight and weariness long before tubercles are developed, and free the mucous membrane of the attempts of the last to form lodgments there. Officers are more subject to phthisis, comparatively, than men; they too sleep (with the exception of the commandant) in apartments rather crowded and badly ventilated, while their counteracting exercise is very moderate, and rather passive. Landsmen going to sea for their health, when there is a predisposition to the dread *opprobrium*, find the motion of the ship, the pure sea air, and hateful sea-sickness itself, renovating; but, if they be passengers or *idlers*, the cruize should be short; otherwise, long imprisonment is apt to bring on indigestion, nervousness, sleepless nights, and other important offsets to the earlier advantages.

Of the cases entered as dysentery and diarrhœa, it would probably be not amiss to suppose them all of the former, taking the terms in their proper signification; that is, considering diarrhœa a mere flux, a flowing through, and dysentery, as the word indicates, a grave and painful disorder of the intestinal canal, in which nature is making constant, but ineffectual efforts to relieve herself of a source of persistent irritation. Of diarrhœa, then, we have few cases, but many of dysentery. Scarcely a cruizer returns from the tropics, particularly from the East or West Indies, without bringing back a great or small proportion of these cases. In the East Indies, I have known nearly one half of a frigate's crew (of the U. S. ship Constitution) suffering at one time with the disease to a greater or less extent, though never more, I think, than one man out of every four or five was actually rendered unfit for duty. In that climate, it is our most formidable enemy; the more so, of course, as our robust and ablebodied seamen are not willing to come down to the sparse and simple diet of the native inhabitants. When Jack reports himself to the surgeon, and is put on rice, and bread and tea, and has his grog stopped, if he can manage to get a pound of pork, buried in beans, from his messmates, who look upon him as an injured and persecuted man, he forgets the harm he does himself in the triumph of "weathering the doctor." Gross diet, crude fruits, and frequently bad water, in addition to the effects of climate, convert a naturally intractable but not generally dangerous disease, into, too often, a fatal one. Dr. McLeod, the accomplished surgeon of the Constitution, showed me a communication he received from a French naval surgeon, on the East India station, in which it was stated that, in the French squadron, great benefit had resulted from allowing none but distilled water to be drunk; or, in case it was not to be had, that the water should be kept on board-ship, before used, at least two months, to give it time for self-purification. This harassing disease is commonly preceded or introduced by constipation; it appears, that with a general prostration of the muscular system, that portion of the intestinal tube loses tone, and is unequal to the task of propelling the contents as it does in ordinary health; then the bowels become torpid, constipated; the contents of the inferior portion become hard and indurated, and at length irritating. Nature then tries to throw off the burdensome scybalæ. Glairy mucus, and bloody serum come away with pain and straining, in place of natural alvine dejections. I do not propose, in this paper, to dwell on the treatment of disease, but may remark *en passant*, that I have seen the most soothing effects from free doses of mercurials (calomel, in twenty-grain doses), from general or local bloodletting, according to circumstances, and from hot fomentations, &c., over the seat of pain; while, on the other hand, I may say that in most cases bloodletting was not called for, and that I treated some cases experimentally, without mercury, without any other apparent difference than that their progress towards recovery was somewhat slower. Of astringents, when called for, I know of no single one more reliable than the unpretending alum. et potass. sulphas.

Of the fevers, and various other maladies enumerated at the beginning of this paper, I have at present nothing to say. With some of them I have no familiarity, and others are common to all conditions and all climates, and therefore have no particular bearing on the subject in question. I will therefore conclude, at once, with a short notice of a subject of naval *hygiene*. It is scarcely necessary to premise that dampness on ship-board, through all the apartments, is perennial, and that cleanliness holds a rank in naval virtues second only to courage. Now it is a constant bone of contention, whether frequent washing of the lower decks is, or is not, advisable; some commanders and executive officers will keep the ship always flooded with water, only to be suspended while the drying-stoves are exhaling their irrespirable if not mephitic gases. While others, abhorring water, confine their cleaning to the dry scouring of the holy stone. There are yet others, who, in my opinion, have hit that *juste milieu*, that is of more value than the philosopher's stone; they neither forswear sand nor water, but when the weather is bright, warm, and clear, and evaporation prompt, they resort to the deluge. Under other circumstances, when cold, raw weather prevails, or there is rain, they content themselves, and promote the health and comfort of the crew, by dry cleaning.

That great model of a naval commander, Lord Collingwood, gave great attention to the means of preserving health among his men, and he was rewarded with the most remarkable success. I will cite, in conclusion, a few instances. H. M. ship *Venerable*, eighteen weeks at sea, very rotten. On sick list *none*. October, 1803. H. M. ship *Ocean*, off Toulon, May 15th, 1808. "Long time at sea, never getting fresh beef, nor a vegetable; not one man sick." Memoirs, p. 265. "His flag-ship had usually 800 men; on one occasion was more than a year and a half without going into port; during that time, never had more than six, and generally but four on the sick-list.

This result was occasioned by attention to dryness (for he rarely permitted washing between decks), frequent ventilation of hammocks and clothes, circulation below of fresh air, &c. &c.," *Memoirs*, p. 266.

It must be remembered, however, that Lord Collingwood was cruizing in a temperate, healthy region, and not upon Indian, Mexican, or African seas; still, the citations above must be admitted to be most remarkable, and highly worthy of attention. If equal success cannot be obtained by the same means, we might at least hope for a desirable approximation.

ART. XII.—*Case of Congenital Deficiency of the Superior Portion of the Cranium.* By JOHN W. H. TRUGIEN, M. D., of Portsmouth, Va.

H———, aged forty-six, native of Ireland, County of Mayo, married, and the mother of twelve children, all of whom were well formed and perfect, after a gestation of nine months, during which nothing unusual occurred, was seized with labour-pains, at 1 o'clock P. M., June 5th, 1849, and at 4½ o'clock P. M., was delivered of a fine (with the exception of the particular deformity, of which mention is about to be made) female child. As is customary, in our southern country generally, a woman was called upon to preside at the birth of the child; and, consequently, nothing could be ascertained very satisfactory of the phenomena of labour—the relative duration of the different stages, &c. On examining, with the view of detecting the presentation, the strange feeling communicated to the finger of the midwife by the fœtal head, surprising and alarming her, caused her to send for a physician. The second stage of labour was fully commenced when he arrived; the os uteri fully dilated, the head presenting (position not stated), and the arm protruding by the side of the face. The bag of waters was now ruptured by the finger of the accoucheur, and the arm pushed back into uterus, when the head descended regularly, and the child was delivered in due time. It was then found, on examination, that the calvaria or vault of the cranium was entirely deficient, presenting the appearance of having been cleanly sliced off with a knife, on a level with the temporal ridge all around, commencing in front at the superciliary ridges of the frontal bone, extending thence through the parietal and occipital behind, down to the level of the superior semi-circular ridge. The space thus left deficient, was covered by a transparent membrane, through which the brain could be distinctly seen, of a bright scarlet colour. It was deeply interesting to witness the movements of the brain, which were synchronous with those of the respiratory apparatus; the cranial mass rising during expiration, and sinking during inspiration. The parts of the brain exposed to view, were the anterior, middle, and posterior lobes. The spinal